

Please amend the above application as follows:

In The Claims

5 Please amend Claims 1, 8, and 15 and cancel without prejudice Claims 5, 12, and 19 as follows:

10 1. (currently amended) A process for evaluating business objects with no prior association and creating dynamic solution sets based on said evaluation in a computer environment, comprising the steps of:

providing a rule engine;

wherein said rule engine evaluates said business objects ~~without requiring the intervention of a human being;~~

15 providing administration means for allowing a user to maintain the preferences for a specific instance of a business object;

wherein said rule engine uses business rules to evaluate the a relationship between said business objects; and

wherein each business object is a voter that provides votes that are evaluated by said business rules.;

20 providing rule resolution strategy means for resolving conflicts between specific preferences of voters and determining a correct solution set; and

wherein a sequence of voters and an order of the votes included for each voter determine values in said solution set.

25 2. (original) The process of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

providing domain tables;

wherein said tables are used to define the overall set of possible values for a given attribute of a business object; and

wherein said tables are static, configured, or dynamic in nature.

30

3. (original) The process of claim 1, wherein said business rules are configurable, generalized statements of how common processing methods are applied to a specific intersection of data; and wherein said business rules determine privileges, application of business processes, business relationships, choices, and default values.

35

4. (original) The process of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

providing rule administration means for allowing a user to define business rule attributes.

5. (canceled)

6. (original) The process of claim 1, wherein said rule engine returns one solution set for the set of business objects (voters) being referenced.

7. (original) The process of claim 1, wherein said business rules are cached.

10 8. (currently amended) An apparatus for evaluating business objects with no prior association and creating dynamic solution sets based on said evaluation in a computer environment, comprising:

a rule engine;

15 wherein said rule engine evaluates said business objects ~~without requiring the intervention of a human being;~~

administration means for allowing a user to maintain the preferences for a specific instance of a business object;

20 wherein said rule engine uses business rules to evaluate the a relationship between said business objects; and

wherein each business object is a voter that provides votes that are evaluated by said business rules;.

rule resolution strategy means for resolving conflicts between specific preferences of voters and determining a correct solution set; and

25 wherein the sequence of voters and the order of the votes included for each voter determines values in said solution set.

9. (original) The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising:

domain tables;

30 wherein said tables are used to define the overall set of possible values for a given attribute of a business object; and

wherein said tables are static, configured, or dynamic in nature.

10. (original) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said business rules are configurable, 35 generalized statements of how common processing methods are applied to a specific

intersection of data; and wherein said business rules determine privileges, application of business processes, business relationships, choices, and default values.

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising:

5 rule administration means for allowing a user to define business rule attributes.

12. (canceled)

13. (original) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said rule engine returns one solution set
10 for the set of business objects (voters) being referenced.

14. (original) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said business rules are cached.

15. (currently amended) A program storage medium readable by a computer, tangibly
15 embodying a program of instructions executable by the computer to perform method
steps for evaluating business objects with no prior association and creating dynamic solution
sets based on said evaluation in a computer environment, comprising the steps of:

providing a rule engine;

20 wherein said rule engine evaluates said business objects ~~without requiring the~~
~~intervention of a human being;~~

providing administration means for allowing a user to maintain the preferences for a
specific instance of a business object;

wherein said rule engine uses business rules to evaluate the a relationship between
said business objects; and

25 wherein each business object is a voter that provides votes that are evaluated by
said business rules;

providing rule resolution strategy means for resolving conflicts between specific
preferences of voters and determining a correct solution set; and

30 wherein the sequence of voters and the order of the votes included for each voter
determines values in said solution set.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

providing domain tables;

35 wherein said tables are used to define the overall set of possible values for a given
attribute of a business object; and

wherein said tables are static, configured, or dynamic in nature.

17. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein said business rules are configurable, generalized statements of how common processing methods are applied to a specific intersection of data; and wherein said business rules determine privileges, application of business processes, business relationships, choices, and default values.

5

18. (original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:
providing rule administration means for allowing a user to define business rule attributes.

10

19. (canceled)

20. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein said rule engine returns one solution set for the set of business objects (voters) being referenced.

15

21. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein said business rules are cached.